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he was always lying: and indeed everything lie wrote, from the time of attaining any prominence, was denounced as being wholly or in part plagiarism. Even "L'Assommoir" was alleged to be merely a crib from Denis Poulot's "Le Sublime";¹ and, briefly, Ms adversaries would not allow that he was possessed of a single spark of originality.

At this time (1878) he had so many irons in the fire, as the saying goes, that it is difficult to follow his work in strict chronological order. We find him preparing his novel "Nana," collecting materials for it, devising its plot; penning theatrical criticisms for "Le Bien Public," contributing to "Le Voltaire"; planning with Messrs. Busnach and Gastineau a dramatic version of "L'Assommoir"; and writing a series of papers, chiefly on "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," for the "Viestuik Yevropi" of St. Petersburg. One of those papers, a general *critique* of contemporary [French novelists, their methods and their abilities, was a slashing and in some respects unjust onslaught on all who did not conform to the tenets of the Naturalist school. It was published by the Russian review in September (1878), and a month later was denounced by a Swiss periodical, "La Bibliotheque Tjuniverselle," which gave a *rSsumS* of its

contents. Such, however, was then the "insularity" of France with respect to literary happenings abroad, that December arrived before a Parisian journal, "Le Figaro," discovered the obnoxious paper and proceeded to rate its author. This it did in its most virulent style, borrowing for the occasion a variety of slang epithets from the pages of "L'Assommoir." And as a crowning stroke Zola was

¹ "Le Sublime, ou le Travailleur comme il est et ce qu'il pent être," Paris, Charpen.tier, 1865.